

UMS badly needs teaching hosp

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KOTA KINABALU: Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) desperately needs its own teaching hospital to keep producing medical students, whose numbers increase every year.

The Dean of the UMS School of Medicine, Prof. Dr Osman Ali said having a facility to call their own would go a long way towards grinding out medical graduates who could cope with the demands of the profession.

"We need a proper place to train medical students, otherwise learning in an inconducive environment (could produce) doctors who are not well trained and this may cause anxiety among them in future," he said.

He was speaking after opening the International Mental Health Conference 2010 organised by the Asian Medical Students' Association (Amsa) Sabah and Amsa Malaysia, hosted by UMS here, Thursday.

Presently, medical students are sent to either Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Hospital Mesra Bukit Padang or other general hospitals in the various districts to learn in their course.



Osman

"What we have now is not proper for training (and) we need teaching hospitals in all areas, not only teaching mental health but other aspects as well," Osman said, noting transportation problems and travelling distance were some of the causes for concern for students and educators alike.

But the dream of having their own teaching hospital will have to wait for now, he said, as the Government turned down their request for one under the 10th Malaysia Plan (10MP).



Perumal

"We really wanted to push for it under the 10MP but were told it has been declined. But we hope more people would be aware about the importance of a teaching hospital ... if we have one it will be a complete and comprehensive centre for learning and teaching," he said, adding the school has 320 medical students now.

UMS School of Medicine, Biomedical Sciences and Therapeutics Department Head, Prof. Dr Perumal Ramasamy said although the school has managed to cope so far, only time will tell when their resources get really tested.

"People say we're training good doctors but in order to continue doing that we really need a hospital because the numbers (of students) will increase ... we desperately need something for Kota Kinabalu.

"The main problem is (when) doing our examinations ... if we don't even have our own patients and hospital, examinations become a nightmare and very stressful," he said.

Chief Minister Datuk Seri Musa Aman had

said the State Government was working with UMS to turn the Wisma Khidmat building here into a teaching hospital for UMS.

The building was earlier earmarked for a State-run private hospital project but that proposal was shelved following an unfavourable response from the Health Ministry, he said.

Meanwhile, Osman commended and congratulated the organisers of the first-ever conference, saying the university and school always backed student bodies for such events.

Organising chairperson, Cheo Seng Wee said they had gone to Taiwan last year, attending a conference with the same theme and that this conference was actually held to share with delegates including from Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, University College Sedaya International and five Indonesian universities what they had learned.

He said they would also be involved in a community programme through a health promotion exercise in a village and a school in Kudat this Saturday.